Mr. C. A. Kunjunni Raja.—May I know what was the difference noticed in the quantity of earthwork on inspection by the Chief Engineer and that submitted in the Audit Reports of the Assistant Engineer?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—The difference noticed was about Rs. 1,500 worth of earthwork.

Mr. C. A. Kunjunni Raja.— Was any action taken against the Assistant Engineer?

President.—It is a matter under consideration.

Mr. C. A Kunjunni Raja.—At what stage is that consideration?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—I submitted a report to Government and it is kept confidential.

Mr. C. A. Kunjunni Raja.—Was any action taken against the Assistant Engineer ?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—That is under consideration.

Keeping of accounts by toddy shop-keepers.

269. Mr. K. T. Mathew.— Will the Government be pleased to mention that as promised by the Superintendent of Excise in the Legislative Council on 16th Karkadagam 1101, the question "whether toddy shop-keepers also should be made to maintain accounts as in the case of arrack shop-keepers" has been considered and if so, what steps have been taken in the matter, and if no steps have been taken, what is the reason for it ?

Mr. C. V. Antony.—The matter was considered. It was found very difficult to get correct accounts maintained in toddy shops.

Lease of the Tramway.

270. Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—Will the Government be pleased to inform the House:—

(a) whether the Tramway Engineer Mr. King has applied to the Government for leasing the Tramway to him ;

(b) what are the terms proposed by him ;

(c) what has been done with his proposal for taking the Tramway on lease ;

(d) when was the proposal received by the Government?

Mr. K. Govinda Menon.—(a) Yes.

(b) Copy of the terms is placed on the Council Table.

(c) Government thought it inexpedient and inadvisable to lease the Tramway and decided to work it as a Government concern.

(d) 25th May 1928.

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Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—I believe Mr. King was the Tramway Engineer from the beginning of the Tramway line?

Mr. K. Govinda Menon.—No.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—How long was he the Engineer?

Mr. K. Govinda Menon.—For the last 12 and odd years.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—Proposals placed on the Table show that though Mr. King was prepared to take the Tramway on lease for Rs. 12,000 a year, the answer to question (c) is "Government thought it inexpedient and inadvisable to lease the Tramway and decided to work it as a Government concern." I also find from the statement placed on the Council Table in 1104 Government expects a net gain of over a lakh of rupees by extracting about 14,000 candies of teak, rosewood and jungle wood. Could not similar quantities be extracted in previous years also? We find that in the previous years the Tramway was working at a loss. Now for 1104 provision is made for a net gain of a lakh and more by working it at a particular way.

President.—It will be better appreciated probably by the end of this year. Now there is a provision made. Nobody knows how much we are to get.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—If the Government is not sure what they would get in a year, would it not be better to lease the Tram-line for Rs. 12,000 a year, when the man is willing to give two sureties of Rs. 10,000 each for the payment of Rs. 12,000 in two half-yearly instalments? Would it not be better to lease the line to Mr. King who knows the line well and thus be sure of the income for the year?

President.—I think you have proper resources to get the lakh and odd provided for this year?

Mr. K. Govinda Menon.—The answer is there and the question is there. I have nothing more to add.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—From the Proceedings it is seen that Government is going to have a net gain of a lakh and more. But the President says that he is not sure whether he would get it or not. If it is leased to Mr. King, we could be sure of getting at least Rs. 12,000. The Tramway was working at a loss for all the previous years.

President.— If you are in a position to answer, answer; if you cannot, say notice.

Mr. K. Govinda Menon.—I cannot supply the answer. It is a hypothetical question.

President.— Is it a hypothetical question?

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Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—No, Sir, I think I have a right to ask this question in view of the answer given to part (c) of my question. Since we are not sure that we would get a net gain of a lakh and odd, why not we lease it to Mr. King who is willing to take it up on lease for Rs. 12,000 a year?

President.—It remains to be seen whether we really would get that amount.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—So we are on experimental grant.

President.—Not that. There is a large quantity of stock there and it has to be transported. There are also standing trees to be cut and removed. So there is work for two or three years more. We must trust somebody. So we thought of working it as a Government concern.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—Not with those who have abused us outright.

President.—If they abused our trust we should give them up.

271. Mr. A. B. Salem.—Will the Government be pleased to state:—

(a) whether the closing of the Tramway was urged on them by the Special Finance Committee and the Legislative Council ;

(b) whether they will be pleased to place on the Table of the House the latest Diwan's order or scheme for continuing the Tramway ;

(c) whether the present Engineer of the Tramway has applied for a lease of the Tramway ;

(d) if so, will they be pleased to give the terms offered by him and place on the Table the communication from him to the Government in the matter of the lease ;

(e) whether the Tramway was inspected, by any one for the purpose of considering the possibilities of their taking it on lease ;

(f) if any one has so inspected, will the Government be pleased to state their names and connections with Cochin Forest business ?

Mr. K. Govinda Menon.— (a) The answer to the first part is in the affirmative, to the second in the negative.

(b) Copies of the Diwan's Proceedings 11/D/1104 dated 16th August 1928 and of the scheme are placed on the Council Table.

(c) and (d). Vide answer to question No. 270 (a) and (b).

(e) Yes.

(f) Mr. Ranga Mannar of Messrs. Namberumal Chetty & Sons, Contractor.

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